

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 06092 301239Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 301128Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2325
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TUNIS 6092

E.O. 11652: NXA
TAGS: PINT, TS, SOPN
SUBJ: ER-RAI AND DEMOCRATIE ARE WARNED

1. PSD DAILY L'ACTION PUBLISHED LETTER TO EDITOR
AUGUST 27 FROM TUNIS AFRIQUEL- PRESS (GOT PRESS AGENCY)
CORRESPONDENT SALAH BEN HAMIDA EXPRESSING SHARP CRITICISM
OF MSD'S TWO WEEKLIES ER-RAI AND DEMOCRATIE AND THINLY
VEILED WARNING OF RISKS THEY WERE TAKING. LETTER
PROBABLY REPRESENTS MORE THAN PRIVATE VIEWS OF BEN HAMIDA,
GIVEN FACT THAT LETTERS TO EDITOR PUBLISHED IN L'ACTION
OFTEN MIRROR VIEWS OF PSD LEADERSHIP. IT SEEMS LIKELY
THAT MSD IS BEING TOLD IT IS TREADING ON THIN ICE.

2. ARTICLE OPENS WITH REJOINDER OF RECENT ER-RAI AND
DEMOCRATIE QUESTIONING OF TAP OBJECTIVITY, ADDING THAT
SUCH BEHAVIOUR AMONG BROTHER JOURNALISTS TENDS TO CREATE
DIFFERENCES WHICH CAN BE EXPLOITED BY OTHERS FOR "PERSONAL
ENDS". BEN HAMIDA CLAIMED THAT WHILE TRUTH IS MONOPOLY
OF NO ONE, ALL TAP REPORTERS ARE HONEST MEN, DEDICATED
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PAGE 02 TUNIS 06092 301239Z

TO SERVING TUNISIAN STATE. THEY DO NOT CHOOSE TO DIRTY
HANDS WITH TRASH, AS OTHER DO, HE SAID, AND SLANDER
CAMPAIGN OF ER-RAI AND DEMOCRATIE DEMONSTRATES NIHILIST
TENDENCIES AND FUNDAMENTAL INCAPACITY TO USE TRUTH FOR
COMMON GOOD.

3. BEN HAMIDA THEN RECOUNTED FABLE OF NARCISSUS AND

ECHO. HE RECALLED NARCISSUS' DEATH BECAUSE OF
SELF-INFATUATION AND THE SAD END OF ECHO BECAUSE OF HER
GRIEF. LET THE LEGEND BE A WARNING TO ER-RAI AND
DEMOCRATIE AT THE RISKS THEY TAKE, HE SAID. ARTICLE
CONCLUDED WITH STATEMENT THAT ONLY ER-RAI AND DEMOCRATIE

WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR FATE BECAUSE OF HAVING
"CHOSEN TO IGNORE REALITY."
KING

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